- For the balance 15 OSVs, ONGC has invited Global tender with improved bidding conditions to bring in professionally competent and financially sound bidders.
- To improve overall health and performance of the aging fleet, ONGC has undertaken major repairs/revamping through different O&M operators, shipyards and SCI.
- Seaforth Maritime, a Halliburton Group Company, engaged to study Marine Logistics Support Services has submitted its report. ONGC is seized of various suggestions of the Consultant pertaining to communication, management, deployment of OSVs and cost control for further improvement of the system.

Black-marketing of kerosene

1336. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that black marketing of kerosene meant for PDS generate black-money to the tune of Rs. 5,000 crore annually; and

(b) whether Government have any plan to bring about price parity of diesel and kerosene?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) No such specific instance has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) With the dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) in the petroleum sector effective 1st April, 2002, the pricing of diesel has been decontrolled. However, PDS kerosene is a subsidised product, the subsidy of which will be phased out in the next three to five years.

Oil and gas blocks awarded for exploration

1337. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of oil and gas blocks which have been awarded for exploration;

(b) whether there is any agency to monitor the progress of the oil and gas blocks; and

(c) the investment likely to be made for the development of these blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Since operationalisation of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) the Government have signed Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for 70 exploration blocks. *i.e.* 16 blocks situated in onland, 30 blocks in shallow water offshore and 24 blocks in deept water area, with National Oil Companies and Private Companies, either singly or in consortium with other companies, under the three rounds of NELP for exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas. The onland blocks are situated in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

(b) The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) monitors the exploration activities as per the work programme given in respective PSCs and this monitoring is reviewed by the Government from time to time.

(c) Exploration being probabilistic in nature, no definite outcome therefrom can be predicted. Also, as per the terms of the PSCs the contractor has the option to walkout at the end of each of the three exploration phases, provided the minimum work programme for that phase has been completed. Hence, no estimate of investment to be made for development of these blocks can be done. However, the estimated investment for exploration of these blocks as indicated by the awardee companies in their bids is US $ 2,973 million (about Rs. 14567 Crores).

Malpractice in supply of LPG cylinders

†1338. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the illegal trade of smaller cylinders is going on in connivance with Government machinery and the domestic cylinders supplies are underweighted; and

(b) whether Government have taken any step so far in this regard; so the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and action proposed to be taken in this direction?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.